

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



State Dept. review  
completed

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CRISIS

JCS review  
completed.

NAVY review  
completed.

6 AUGUST 1964  
(as of 1300)

NGA review(s)  
completed.

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6 August 1964

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**MEMORANDUM: The North Vietnamese Situation**

**I. Current Developments as of 1300, 6 August 1964**

**A. US Activity**

1. Maddox and Turner Joy resumed their De Soto patrol at 0718Z on 5 August. While en route to intercept their patrol line Maddox reported being approached by several small contacts. Several minutes later, when the contacts had continued closing, the Maddox opened fire. No hits were reported. About 10 minutes later Maddox reported 9 contacts closing fast. Two aircraft from the Constellation reported several small junks in the vicinity of the Maddox. No further reflections were noted and the Maddox and Turner Joy completed their patrol and retired to the southeast at nightfall.

2. The patrol will be resumed on 7 August south of where the incidents occurred, and will terminate on 8 August, according to present plans.

**B. North Vietnamese Activity**

1. Hanoi has reported the US air attack to its people in an official government statement and a party daily editorial, both on 6 August, but has avoided mention of the extent of damage. The wording of the statements indicates that Hanoi hopes to use the action to spur patriotic and military fervor among its populace. The regime has reported that large protest rallies were held in many DRV cities following the strike.

2. No specific threats of retaliation or claims of foreign military or other assistance have been noted. In their statement, the North Vietnamese have lumped together the US strike with other recent DRV allegations of US bombing and maritime forays against North Vietnam, apparently in an effort to demonstrate that the US is engaged in a deliberate

campaign of armed military action against it. The DRV government statement of 5 August, for example, charged that the strike was a preconceived "act of war," directly ordered by President Johnson. 25X1

6. Peiping's first direct commentary on the current crisis came after a delay of more than three days. A Chinese government statement broadcast on 6 August and an editorial in People's Daily the same day reiterated previous warnings that the Chinese people will "not sit idly by" and stated flatly that "aggression by the US against the DRV means aggression against China." Peiping avoided any threat of retaliation at this time, and underscored the role of "Vietnamese" forces in defending the DRV. Perhaps to prepare justification in advance for deployment of Chinese forces into the DRV, the government statement asserts that because the US has "lit the flames of war" in Indochina all signers of the Geneva agreements now have the "right" to assist the North Vietnamese.

## II. Assessment of 5 August Strike Damage to DRV Navy

A. Preliminary post-strike assessments, which are based on aerial photography and pilot reports, claim that about half of North Vietnam's estimated 46 high-speed patrol boats were destroyed or damaged by the US strike. Thirty patrol boats were observed during the missions; 8 were sunk, 6 severely damaged, and 14 others hit. At Vinh, 12 of 14 large petroleum storage tanks were destroyed and one six gun AAA installation was severely damaged.

B. The exact number of torpedo boats (PT's) knocked out by these strikes is unclear. Of the 46 craft in North Vietnam's inventory, 16 are believed to be PT's. However, it is apparent that a large percentage of them were sighted on 5 August and came under heavy fire.

C. The POL facility at Vinh that was virtually destroyed by these strikes is believed to represent about ten percent of Hanoi's total POL storage capacity. Its destruction will undoubtedly seriously curtail North Vietnam's naval patrol capability along the southern half of the coast.

D. A total of 64 sorties were flown by US aircraft from the USS Ticonderoga and Constellation. The following target area, from south to north along the coast, were struck

during these missions: Quang Khe, Vinh area, Loc Chau Estuary (north of Sung Ma River) and Hon Gay. The planned strike on Port Wallut, near the Chinese border, was cancelled.

E. US aircraft met with heavy antiaircraft artillery fire over the target areas: One jet tanker was down in the Hon Gay area. The pilot was observed by other pilots in a parachute descent, possibly to a point on land. Hanoi has claimed the capture of one US pilot in that raid.

F. A piston engine fighter bomber was lost over Hon Me Island, northeast of the Loc Chau estuary. No parachute was observed and the pilot is presumed dead. Two other aircraft were damaged but returned safely.

### III. Deployments of US Forces

A. On 5 August, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered various military units under the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) to deploy or to prepare to deploy to the west Pacific area. The following is a resume of military unit deployment as of 1700 hours EDT on 5 August:

B. Ground Forces: A special landing force consisting of 1,800 marines and 24 helicopters aboard the carrier Valley Force is setting out from Subic Bay for South Vietnam. It is expected to arrive off Danang by 7 August. A full marine brigade (7,500 men) is moving by amphibious landing craft from Okinawa. It is due in the South China Sea area on 13 August. An infantry brigade of the 25 Division in Hawaii has been alerted for possible movement to Thailand, and an airborne brigade in Okinawa has been notified that it may be deployed to the Southeast Asia area at anytime.

C. Naval Forces: A carrier support group with eight DD's has left Japan and is scheduled to arrive in the South China Sea on 10 August. A carrier attack group with two DD's and 63 jet fighters left California on 5 August and should arrive in the west Pacific area on 15 August.

D. Air Units: Twelve F102 fighter interceptors from Clark AFB have arrived in South Vietnam. A fighter squadron of 18 F105's has been authorized to move to Thailand from Japan. Four F-100's from Clark AFB are en route to Thailand, and 14 more are to follow. Three fighter squadrons based in the continental US are scheduled to move to the

Phillipines and Japan to fill the vacancies created by the above deployments. Two tactical bomber squadrons (32 B-57's) are on their way to South Vietnam.

#### IV. World Reaction

##### A. Communist Reactions

1. A Hanoi military communique of 5 August, broadcast to domestic audiences, reported the US strike, but avoided any indication that substantial damage was effected. The wording of the communique indicates that Hanoi hopes to use the US action to spur patriotic and military fervor among its populace. No specific threats of retaliation against the US and its allies, or claims of impending military support for North Vietnam from other bloc nations, were contained in the communique. The statement lumped the strike with other recent DRV allegations of US bombing and maritime incursions against North Vietnam, in an apparent effort to demonstrate that the US is engaged in a deliberate campaign of armed military action against Hanoi.

2. The only extensive Soviet commentary on the current crisis is contained in a mildly worded TASS statement of 5 August. The statement, which seemed calculated to arouse foreign opposition to US policies in Southeast Asia, warned only that "further rash steps or provocations" could result in a dangerous and broad conflict.

3. Castro's propaganda mills are grinding away in a predictable manner, hinting that the results of the new Yankee "warlike adventure" will have some unspecified, but dire results.

##### B. Free World Reactions

1. In contrast to the British, who have expressed strong official support of US actions, the French are reserving comment. Paris has officially approved the Soviets' call for North Vietnamese participation in Security Council discussions of the Tonkin Gulf incidents. German officialdom and the press have also pledged full support of the US, saying that President Johnson's "quiet and proper" course is the right way to handle the situation.

2. In Rome, Moro, who has his problems with his parliamentary left-wing, has not yet officially reacted but will probably come out today in support of the US. Saragat has told us privately of his support.



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3. There have been no significant reactions in the Middle East, and only scattered, but generally favorable, response in Africa. The Indians have expressed grave concern after an emergency cabinet meeting.

4. The Far Eastern and SEATO reaction is firm in support of US measures. The soft spots, however--Burma, Cambodia, and Indonesia--have so far been publicly silent, and privately dismayed.

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5. There has been a note of apprehension about escalation in some of the Latin American reaction.

6. At the UN, the corridor betting is that both North and South Vietnam will be invited by the Security Council to take part in debate, which may begin tomorrow or Saturday.

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